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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001177

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TAGS: AF MARR MASS PREL NATO EZ

SUBJECT: CZECHS PREPARATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO LOGAR,
AFGHANISTAN

REF: PRAGUE 1144

Classified By: A/POL-ECON Counselor M. Strong for reasons 1.4 b+d.

1.(C) Summary and Comment: Czech preparations to deploy by mid-March 2008 a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Logar Province, Afghanistan are on track. Czech staffing of the PRT is nearly complete, but efforts are still plagued by equipment shortfalls, especially lightly armored vehicles. In her October 4 meeting, DASD Cagan promised to try to obtain 20 M1151 armored Humvees and associated IED jammers (reftel). Final approval for the deployment of the PRT rests with the Czech Parliament, which is expected to approve the Czech Foreign Military Deployments bill by mid-December. End Summary and Comment.

Deployment Plans

2.(C) According to Czech deployment plans, the full Czech PRT contingent of 180 soldiers and 10 reconstruction experts will be in Logar by March 21, 2008. The first advance troops will arrive at FOB Shank in early January 2008, with the majority of Czech troops arriving during the second half of February.

Personnel

3.(C) Almost all of the members of the first Czech PRT contingent have been selected. The first PRT Commander will be LTC Rudolf Honzak, a 2006 graduate of the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The bulk of the troops that will comprise the Czech PRT's first six-month deployment will come from the elite 102 Reconnaissance Battalion, including two 34-man infantry platoons. The second Czech PRT contingent scheduled to be deployed in August 2008 will come mostly from the Czech 7th Mechanized Brigade. While tour lengths for Czech military members serving at the PRT will be limited to six months, civilian aid experts assigned to the PRT may serve for up to one year. The Czech PRT civilian experts section may include a representative from the Czech NGO, People in Need, a charity with recent experience in Afghanistan.

Training

4.(C) Some of the Czech soldiers assigned to the Czech PRT will participate in pre-deployment training in November at the U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany. Additionally, in late November, a mobile training team (MTT) comprised of several U.S. Army personnel currently assigned to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank that will house the Czech PRT will travel to the Czech Republic to participate in pre-deployment training for the PRT. U.S. Army Europe will also support this training.

Equipment

15. (C) The Czechs are planning to deploy a total of 50 vehicles, including: 12 partially armored Land Rovers, five armored Toyota Land Cruisers, one partially armored Land Rover equipped with an Israeli-produced NETLIN C "Guard" VHF ECM, four maintenance trucks, and two general purpose transportation trucks. The Czechs will also deploy four BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles. During her meetings with Czech Officials on October 4, 2007, DASD Cagan offered to loan the Czechs on a renewable basis up to 20 M1151 up-armored HMWWVs for use by the Czech PRT (reftel). In late 2008 or early 2009, the Czechs may deploy the Czech-produced STOJKA III UAV system in support of the PRT. Until then, two BMP-1 mounted Ground Surveillance Radar systems will be deployed to help provide surveillance of FOB Shank.

Parliamentary Approval

16. (U) On October 22, the Government approved the Czech Army's foreign operations for 2008. According to the decision, the government will seek parliamentary approval for 180 troops for the PRT. In total, the deployment bill includes 415 soldiers for Afghanistan in 2008, up from this year's 224. The Czech government sees the Logar PRT as a symbol of its commitment to NATO and a way to concentrate its efforts in Afghanistan. We expect the Parliament to approve the foreign deployments bill, including the PRT, by December 2007.

Graber